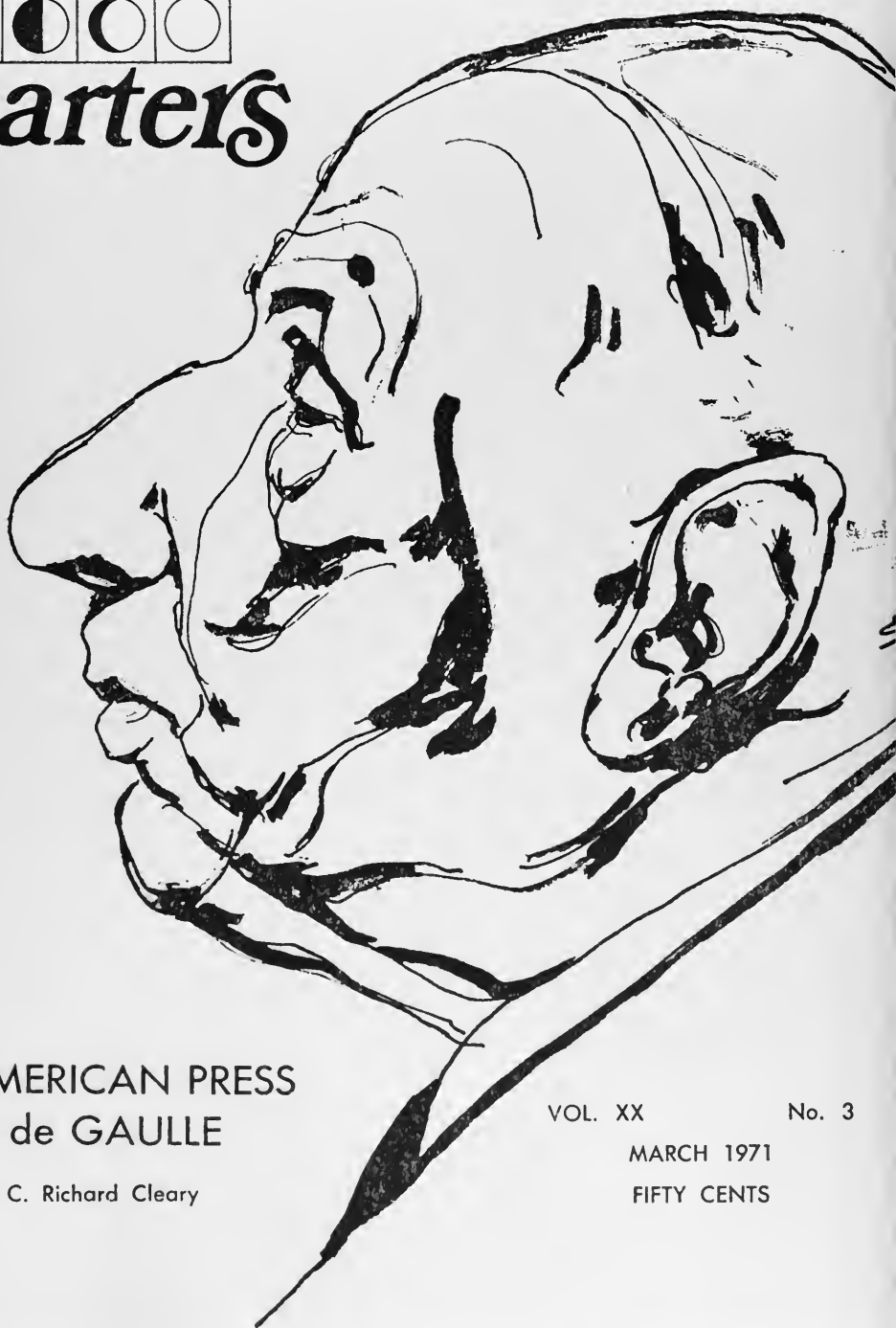


# Four Quarters



THE AMERICAN PRESS  
vs. de GAULLE


by C. Richard Cleary

VOL. XX

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MARCH 1971

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# Marginalia . . .

Something has been happening to names in this country. Perhaps it started with the rock groups, who have left far behind them the unimaginative but reasonably intelligible names like "Bill Haley and the Comets." Today a musical group must have a more abstract name (Three Dog Night, Free, Dreams), or perhaps one with a literary flavor (Uriah Heep, Steppenwolf, Cold Blood). Such names can present communication problems when lodged in a spoken English sentence: "Do you have my Vanilla Fudge record?" "I've got Cold Blood for you if you'll let me have your Cream or Three Dog Night." To get the full effect of such language, you've got to say it aloud, thus removing capitalization and punctuation and transforming English into a code known only to the young.

Some of this chaos can be traced to the demise of the humble article "the." That little word did the remarkably functional job of identifying substantives and making sentences sensible. But at this very moment, as we stand poised to launch a ringing defense of the humble article, we remember the name of this magazine.

Frankly, it doesn't seem to fit most sentences in which it occurs any more smoothly than does the Grateful Dead. Try walking up to your local bookseller and asking, "Do you have four quarters?" He gives you change. Or, beaming proudly, announce "My poem is in four quarters." Someone is likely to hand you Scotch Tape.

We might have felt worse about the name problem we were experiencing had we not come across a list of titles of literary magazines. Respected old names like Antioch Review and The Massachusetts Review are upstaged on the list by names that would be the envy of any rock group.

We immediately began visualizing a contributor's biographical note which said: "I began publishing in *Dust*, *Pebble*, and *Matter*, moving on to *Consumption* from there. Part of my first novel was seen in *Hanging Loose*, which led to *Illuminations* and *Discovery* and eventually to the *Magdalene Syndrome Gazette*. Some of my most luscious poems appeared in *Hollow Orange* and *Kumquat* before those magazines were absorbed by *Caterpillar* and *Insect Trust Gazette*. I received the *Charlton* award, the *Open Skull* prize, and an invitation to be part of *What's Happening*."

—J. J. K.

# The American Press vs. de Gaulle

## No Hits, No Runs, Too Many Errors

• C. Richard Cleary

During the past decade Charles de Gaulle attracted an enormous amount of attention in the American press. Indeed, it was largely through the efforts of this medium that he achieved an unpopularity not matched by any statesman of the West since Stalin and rivaled elsewhere only by the standing of Mao Tse-Tung. This fact is not altogether strange when one recollects the assumptions of our newsmen about de Gaulle's motive and character, the interpretations placed upon his ideas, the dismal estimates of his accomplishments, and the numerous prognoses of failure or reversal of his policies.

It is now timely to draw up a preliminary balance sheet—a boxscore, so to speak—of the hits and misses in the journalistic version of General de Gaulle. Such a task can be approached only with keen regret that A. J. Leibling has not survived to do it, for no writer of the past generation had a sharper eye (or pen) for exposing the pretensions, pomposities and pratfalls of the press.

A summary of press commentary on the Gaullist constitution is a good place to begin. The Fifth Republic established among other things a strong, directly elective Presidency, replacing the executive debility and curbing the parliamentary chaos of previous regimes. Today almost all journalists express admiration for these new institutions and consider them de Gaulle's principal monument and accomplishment. A few years ago the presidential system was often described as a dictatorship, fashioned to the personal caprices of its imperious author and original occupant. Similar charges were once frequently made about the relationship of George Washington to another constitution. When it became clear in the course of the sixties that the French system was no less democratic than any other, the journalistic judgment was that, whatever its virtues, it could not survive the departure of de Gaulle. Now, only two years after he departed, it has become a "monument." This verdict could be a source of concern for admirers of the French regime who knew the batting average of the press in evaluating Gaulliana.

But this retrospect is devoted mainly to reportage on de Gaulle's diplomacy rather than his domestic policies or institutions. In scanning the summaries of the press coverage that follow, veteran newsmen will note that a few journalists lagged far behind their colleagues in exposing Gaullist errors. Among the laggards (an absurdly small percentage of the profession) were such writers as C. L. Sulzberger, reputedly better acquainted with de Gaulle than any American newspaperman; and Walter Lippmann,

who admired and perhaps understood him better than Sulzberger did. Such writers do not deserve to share the credit earned by the analytical acumen of the press recounted below. No matter; their peculiar views made hardly a ripple on the mainstream of public opinion.

Until 1962, our *corps de press*—though never remiss in reminding readers of de Gaulle's dangerous "irrational" and "ultra-nationalistic" tendencies—did not fail to report with approval some of his more spectacular accomplishments: the restoration of civilian control over a French army that had run amok; the transformation of civil war into civil peace; the granting of independence to Algeria in a "peace of the brave," the ending of a war he had inherited from his predecessors; and the liberation of France's vast sub-Saharan African empire. A few writers even noted approvingly that de Gaulle inaugurated what was, and is, the world's most generous foreign economic aid program and urged other rich nations to cooperate in further assistance to the poor nations. But since 1962, the news from Paris has almost all been bad.

As newspaper readers were to learn, first with dismay, then anger (and finally horror), de Gaulle "assailed" in the years that followed almost every contemporary principle of American foreign policy. The response of our news media to this challenge was all-out and overwhelming. This brief account cannot catalogue every single Gaullist error and "delusion" whose malice and folly our newsmen exposed throughout the remainder of the decade. Fortunately, there is a shorter and simpler method for reckoning the score compiled by our journalists in this contest. It is sufficient to recapitulate the particular issues on which the Press achieved its greatest unanimity and vehemence; then, to note the number of hits, runs and errors on each side. The key issues reviewed below include de Gaulle's policies on China, European political unification, England and the Common Market, NATO and Nuclear Weapons, the development of relationships between the Communist and non-Communist nations of Europe, Vietnam, Israel and the Middle East.

The bad news began with de Gaulle's January, 1963 press conference. It got worse in 1964 when the world was consternated to learn of de Gaulle's decision to establish diplomatic relations with China. Many considered this an act of spite against America, though editorial condemnation was by no means universal. Yet, even among editorialists who had long advocated a similar course for the United States, many were able to detect an anti-American malice in the French move. An occasional eccentric like Lippmann considered the action timely and intelligent; but most editors opined that no good would come to France from it. If true, one can only bemoan the fact that other American Allies, including Canada, have since followed France in this "foolish and futile" act.

No subjects of foreign news consumed more printer's ink from 1963 to 1969 than de Gaulle's "blockage" of a political federation, his "attacks" on the Common Market and his "blackball" of British membership in the prosperous European Economic Union. Those who doubt the power of the press should ponder its accomplishments in persuading millions of Americans that General de Gaulle—gratuitously and almost singlehandedly—sabotaged these goals of all right-thinking people. Only four days

after the obsequies at Colombey, the *Times* once again editorially declared that attainment of all these goals was now in sight. *Post de Gaulle ergo propter ejus mortem.*

The fact is that no European government—before, during or since de Gaulle—has advanced or endorsed concrete proposals to form a political federation. The scenario depicting de Gaulle as lone obstructor of a projected federation, toward which all his neighbors pressed, is also flawed by the following historical facts. Since time began, no group of independent states have ever succeeded in forming a voluntary federation that was not preceded by a confederation; and the Gaullist regime was the only European Government to initiate and urge definite steps to create a confederal organization. Though Germany and Italy seemed willing to accept the French-backed Fouchet project of European political organization, the Netherlands and Belgium flatly refused. But never mind; the journalistic version of de Gaulle as one-man destroyer of “Europe” was dramatically too good to scrap. By retaining the image of the clumsy giant, out-of-step with his enlightened neighbors, obit writers could still deplore de Gaulle’s “shortsightedness” in choosing to remain “merely” President of France when he could have become first President of the “United States of Europe.”

As to Gaullist “disruption” of the European Common Market, numerous unemotional observers outside the field of journalism have already opined that he prevented its paralysis and propelled it into new fields of growth. It seems unlikely that history will reverse this opinion.

Foreign news editors have cushioned themselves against the shock of recognition that nothing substantial has changed in *apres-Gaulle* French policy on this issue. Only two cushions were needed. The first of these expedients was to emphasize the fact that all member states were now in agreement on the necessary preconditions for Britain’s admission; the other was simply to smother the fact that President Pompidou’s policy is identical to his predecessor’s.

There has indeed been a change: readers of newspaper captions no longer get the impression that everybody is in step except France. From this, an elementary logic student could infer what was always evident to competent analysts: not a single European government was willing to accept the terms Britain had earlier demanded for entry into the Community. An astute summary by *Times* correspondent John L. Hess (in his book, *The Case For de Gaulle*, N. Y., 1968), written just before the “collapse” of Gaullism, has not appeared in the news or editorial columns of any American newspaper: “It is a commentary on journalism that the following statement may come as a surprise: *Britain never offered to join the Common Market as is.*”

Scandalous as it may seem to anti-Gaullist True Believers, the General was always favorable to the idea of British entry into the Market. This, he declared, “could only be a good thing”: but he never deluded himself nor misled others about the unreadiness of his old English allies, at any time in the sixties, to accept the obligations of membership. Now, as then, it is for the British to decide for themselves.

The Franco-American NATO contest, pitting the Press (*inter alia*)

against de Gaulle, was one of the most exciting events of the decade. For a time it appeared as if the entire structure of Western security was about to collapse because of the megalomania of that misguided Frenchman. An American novel, depicting him\* as a senile, half-blind dupe in the hands of a Svengalian Russian agent, led the best-seller list in the late sixties. It was almost as apocryphal as the press reports on which it was based.

Briefly the game went like this. De Gaulle apparently believed that the nations geographically most likely to be incinerated ought to have a voice in the nuclear global strategy from which such a holocaust could result. In 1958, therefore, he proposed such an agreement among the U. S., England and France. At the same time (and often thereafter) he indicated that the alternative for France would be withdrawal from the military command organization called NATO. He never suggested withdrawing from the original North Atlantic Alliance—so long as it remained devoted to its proper goal: European and Atlantic security.

It is not surprising that news commentators discounted this threat to get out of the American dominated military system: their own government dismissed it as a bluff. Our senior officials knew that, despite everything, de Gaulle was a "realist" and that "realists" never reject American military policy. The logic was impeccable and its conclusions were dutifully amplified in the press (except by Walter Lippman). This reasoning served to temper journalistic dismay at the piecemeal, systematic withdrawal of French forces over a period of several years. The last of these forces departed from NATO in 1966, and America was simultaneously obliged to remove its forces from France. The press contrived to present this conclusion of a long process as a "sudden" and shocking "defection." After having uttered the "unheard of" for several years, de Gaulle had done the "unthinkable."

But only a battle, not the war, had been lost. Armed with another leaf from Professor Coué's book, newsmen resorted to repetitive oracular incantation; de Gaulle's policy would be repudiated by the French people. Before long, this vein of prophecy petered out. A last line of defense remained—one as impregnable as the Maginot line: eventually de Gaulle would depart and sanity would return to French military policy. Meanwhile an empty chair would be kept for France. However irksome the delay, we could afford to wait. This American policy concept had, like most others, a wholesome, happy ending: everything would fall in place more or less exactly the way Washington wanted—afterwards. Art Buchwald aptly dubbed it the "Death of de Gaulle Policy."

This episode could have come to a triumphal conclusion for the press

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\* Under the name "General de la Pierre" in the book *Topaz* by Leon Uris. This work provided a fascinating symbiosis of Journalism with Creative Art. Not only were the plot and characters of this purported roman a clef derived from newspaper stories, but indeed the book's "revelations" about de Gaulle's "folly" in falling victim to Soviet-planted "disinformation" made front-page political "news" from coast to coast.

*Topaz* received lavish praise from newspaper literary critics. The reviewers—blinded perhaps by their enthusiasm for the content of the book—failed to recognize that its author had created a radically new art-form. Capote had already given America the "non-fiction novel"; from Uris came the first authentic "non-novel fiction."



except that it was badly miscast. Of the several political parties in France, only one espoused the American position regarding NATO. After campaigning on that platform, this group (a very small one) was totally extinguished in the subsequent election.

There were of course many side plots and sequels in the dreadful story of the French "desertion" of NATO. One of the main ones concerned the "tragedy" of French military policy. Curiously enough, the deserting French soldiers did not actually leave France. In fact, the strength of their armed forces actually increased, for they were now being equipped with nuclear weapons which France had the effrontery to manufacture on its own, without the slightest help or encouragement from America.

On the issue of de Gaulle's nuclear weapons program there were hardly any deviations from journalistic orthodoxy. After preliminary scoffing at French ability to achieve the requisite high level of technology, a number of other canons were adduced: the nuclear program would bankrupt the country; it would provoke German demands for nuclear weapons; the Gaullist bombs lacked "credibility," and were in any case unnecessary since American nuclear force guaranteed French safety against all threats.

The first two of these doctrines seemed to have been shelved by the press by the end of the decade. No one hopes that the other two will be put to the test of experience. It is true, however, that professional military experts, unlike journalists, have not scoffed at the credibility of the French nuclear deterrent. And many competent strategists agree that French ability to exterminate even a few metropolitan areas might well be sufficient "to deter any aggressor from attacking a country that is not looking for trouble." (Hess, p. 100).

Even as mourners assembled at Paris and Colombey, many "news analysts" were reviving their earlier forecasts of a new French policy "abandoning such expensive Gaullist pretensions as the *force de frappe*." This was just before President Pompidou announced his decision to advance by several years the scheduled date for deployment of a new H-bomb.

As the decade ended, some of the most inveterate scoffers grudgingly conceded that de Gaulle was probably right and certainly reasonable in "his assumption that the United States would never risk atomic destruction in the defense of France." Hence, his nuclear policy was at least prudent. But by this time the NATO-Nuclear Series was already over and the press had scored a long string of goose-eggs.

Before reverberations of de Gaulle's "demolition of Western Defenses" had died down in the news media, the General supplied several new initiatives for the press to depreciate. One of these was his demarché in the direction of "détente, entente and cooperation," with the East. There was nothing new in the Gaullist dream of healing the tragic breach between Eastern and Western Europe; it had been adumbrated in his public utterances for decades. His much publicized visits to Poland and Russia in 1967 aimed to give new impetus to this design and, in particular, to prepare the way for normalization of German relations with her former eastern enemies.

The results of the trip—which incidentally yielded profitable trade and technical cooperation treaties for France—were generally dismissed

as an exercise in futility and illusion. His related efforts to persuade Germany to junk the Hallstein doctrine, which forbade diplomatic relations with any power recognizing East Germany, and to give de jure recognition to the de facto Oder-Neisse frontier with Poland, were likewise viewed dimly by the press.

A Soviet-German non-aggression treaty, marking a new stage of détente between those powers, was concluded shortly before de Gaulle's death. A few days after came the signature of the German-Polish frontier treaty—widely heralded in the German press as the most significant step towards reconciliation since the end of World War II.

It is still too soon to say how this game will end, but it was fatuous to forecast its failure. Since the conclusion of Germany's two eastern treaties the news has dutifully recorded the murmurings of Cold War "realists," like Dean Acheson and George Ball, that it is all bound to come to a bad end. Meanwhile, a considerable number of American journalists have embraced the notion that European initiatives towards détente might not be such a bad idea after all. They have also succeeded, so far, in avoiding recollection that it was de Gaulle's policy that launched this movement and French diplomacy that paved the way for its recent progress. All the same, this omission does reflect creditably on the consistency of the press: it had already reported the "collapse" of all the General's "major policies," especially this one, which had been "devastated by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia" in 1968.

Space prohibits more than passing mention here of the editorial ire and contempt evoked in the mid-sixties by General de Gaulle's meddling with the "courageous" and "far-sighted" policy America pursued in Vietnam. Humanity also counsels against berating sinners who have shown—since the 1968 Tet offensive—signs of repentance and a firm resolution to amend their Indochinese reporting.

Time will tell whether this tragic bloodbath ends according to the General's prescription: negotiations with the "real forces" of Vietnam and announcement of a definite date for withdrawal of U. S. forces. News about de Gaulle's recently published *Memoirs d'espoir* has already told of his advice to President Kennedy in their 1961 meeting: avoid military intervention in Vietnam—it will be an endless quagmire. Also recorded was de Gaulle's melancholy forecast that his advice would be rejected by the attractive and inexperienced young American.

It remains for statisticians to tally the number of times editors have angrily repudiated the notion that France had any rights, interests or standing to offer counsels about Southeast Asia. Psychologists will have to explain the decade-long fit of absentmindedness that caused them to overlook the residue of a century of French cultural, religious, political and economic investment in that area.

Success has not yet rewarded de Gaulle's tenacious attempts to place France in a position to mediate an end to our agonizing adventure in Vietnam. But time has dealt cruelly with our media's once standard explanation of this noble effort: viz, that it was an expression of envy, egomania and a lacerated pride that resented American success in a theatre where France had failed.

The most productive period for Gaullophobia since the Casablanca conference occurred in 1967. Among the General's many derelictions that year, the most damning was his exposure as an ally of Arab aggression against Israel and an unwitting tool of Soviet imperialism in the Middle East.

In the midst of general jubilation over Israel's spectacular victory in the Six-Day War came news of de Gaulle's treacherous "attack" on that doughty little democracy. Not content with condemning Israel for the "opening of hostilities," he forbade shipment of 50 Mirage fighter-bombers for which Israel had already paid the purchase price and later, after Jewish commandos had demolished Lebanon's commercial air fleet at Bierut airport, embargoed all shipments of French weapons to Israel.

French "default" on both delivery and reimbursement for the fifty fighter-bombers was the subject of innumerable news columns. After some months, when the last drop of anti-French feeling had been wrung from this issue, a few newspapers gave fleeting and casual mention of the fact that France had sought to return the advance payment on the war planes, but that Israel—still hoping for their eventual delivery—refused to accept it. All the same, the Keepers of our National Conscience had made their point: it was a very shabby thing for France to do.

The "National Conscience" was not lulled into forgetfulness about the other matter—the total French military embargo against Israel after the latter's exploit at Bierut Airport. France had been Israel's main military supplier since 1950 and the Press would not forgive de Gaulle's treachery in rendering the Zionist state suddenly "defenseless" against millions of armed, bloodthirsty Arab neighbors. Oddly enough, France—unlike America and England—also refused to sell arms to any Arab belligerents.

Israel's overwhelming military victory was never in doubt—except in the minds of millions of fans of daily newspaper melodrama; but the political outcome of this adventure is still uncertain. For this reason, some may consider it unsporting to recall de Gaulle's advice to Foreign Minister Abba Eban on the eve of Israel's blitzkrieg against the Arabs. Essentially it was that France would aid Israel if she were attacked, but condemn her undertaking if she attacked; that in view of Israel's superior unity, organization and arms, there could be little doubt of her military success.

Among the many newswriters who celebrated Israel's smashing military success of June 1967, few have cared to recall de Gaulle's prophecy of May: "then you would find yourselves in growing difficulties, on the ground and from the international point of view . . . many countries will little by little put the blame on you as conquerors."

Reporters have worked hard since 1967 to maintain the David vs. Goliath image of Israel vis-a-vis her enemies. For two years or so they enjoyed remarkable success—and against stiff odds, considering the massive military devastation visited upon the Arabs by members of Moshe Dayan's Middle Eastern Peace Corps. But time has blurred the sharp and sinister features of the press portrait of de Gaulle as unwilling accomplice in a Soviet plot to destroy Israel. Also badly faded is the less implausible picture of the cynical opportunist exploiting Israel's peril to curry favor with Arab clients. The image of de Gaulle as anti-Israelite was

considerably dimmed by the public testimony of Levi Eshkol and David ben Gurion. These witnesses—neither noted for anti-Zionist bias—publicly declared their belief that de Gaulle's behavior, however mistaken, did not indicate the slightest hostility towards Israel.

More recently, others have been able to perceive that de Gaulle's policy of neutrality and his resolute efforts to secure peace in the Middle East through Great Power concertation, are not necessarily destructive or even selfish policies. Since 1969 even our own Government has moved in this direction. The transition has not been an easy one for news editors. When President Nixon decided to adopt the gist of de Gaulle's Middle Eastern peace propositions (now called the "Rogers Plan"), a *Times* caption labeled them "Nasser's" proposals!

No development of the decade generated more vilification and derision than de Gaulle's policy on the international monetary issue. It is arguable, indeed, that no event in the history of modern American journalism evoked more hysterical and hallucinatory reportage. It began in 1965 with what the press depicted as de Gaulle's "attack on the dollar" and achieved climaxes in the 1967 "raid on Fort Knox" and devaluation of the Pound.

Though the issues and mechanism involved in the monetary problem are too complex for analysis in this limited space, a few observations may help put this matter into better perspective.

The American backed Bretton Woods system, adopted after World War II, made the American dollar (and British Pound) an international medium of exchange and reserve currency that could be held by foreign central banks as backing for their own currency issues. Underlying this system was the fundamental assumption that America would always maintain at least a balance if not a surplus in its own international financial transactions. The system worked well enough so long as America paid its international bills, and generally maintained the value of its currency. Since 1958, the U. S. has done neither of these necessary things, with the result that the system has become abusive. Although the system has not yet been substantially reformed in the direction the Gaullists desired, many if not most foreign bankers and finance ministers now tend to agree that de Gaulle was not "attacking" either the dollar or Fort Knox: he was asking the U. S. to revise policies that were damaging all Western currencies, including the dollar. The alternative according to the French view, was to change the rules of the International monetary game to discourage foreign expenditures on a prodigal scale by a country that is super-rich at the expense of nations who are not.

Unlike the political reporters and columnists, the arcane writings of little-read financial experts did not share the delusion that France was the author of the financial crisis of the sixties; yet, while de Gaulle remained in power, the press made effective use of the French bogey to obscure the reality that a basic cause of the dollar/gold-flow crisis was exactly what de Gaulle indicated: lack of discipline in American economic and financial policies. An interesting footnote—not prominently recorded in the press: during the frantic gold rush of 1967 it turned out that not an ounce had had been purchased by Paris; it had all been "taken away" from us by

such respectable creditors as Switzerland, Italy, the Netherlands, etc.

As to the Sterling crisis of 1967 preceding devaluation of the Pound, newspaper reportage produced a traumatic impact in America unsurpassed even by the fall of Singapore to the Japanese in 1942. Stenographers and store clerks were observed (by this writer) at the brink of tears of outrage against de Gaulle, whose "attack" on British currency was supposed to have caused this awful event. Passions reached a pitch as high as a few months earlier when, according to press reports, New York merchants retaliated against de Gaulle's "attack" on Israel by pouring French perfumes into the gutters and calling for a general embargo of imports from France.

These reportorial eruptions helped for a time to obfuscate the reasons why the Pound collapsed: chronically sluggish economy, stagnant exports, soaring imports, twenty-eight consecutive years of international trade deficit. The final crunch came with the Six-Day War of 1967, which closed the Suez Canal and precipitated massive withdrawal of Arab funds from British banks.

By this writer's tally, the team total for American political journalists in the International League (financial) Series of 1965-68 would be: no hits, no runs and too many errors to be tabulated.

A pattern of striking consistency appeared in media denunciations of de Gaulle: the General would make a prescient pronouncement about conditions he did not create but merely perceived, e.g. the danger of instability of the dollar if America did not correct its habitual deficit in international financial transactions; the need for Great Power concertation to help resolve the Middle Eastern crisis, and so on and so forth. His declarations are derided as fanciful or denounced as spiteful. Sooner or later events validate his analysis or forecast. He is then accused of responsibility for these conditions and convicted of having engineered the fulfillment of his prophecies.

Anyone wondering how newsmen got away with such bad reporting among generally well educated readers might begin by asking any professional man about the calibre of reportage in the field he knows best. Experts tend to consider the press responsible and well informed—except in the fields of their own expertise. America abounds in experts; "generalists" are a rarity anywhere. In the kingdom of the blind, a one-eyed man is monarch. Perhaps it was only necessary to be half blind to perceive de Gaulle's policies as "deluded," and portray their author as a "renegade friend," "monstrous ingrate," "mortal enemy," and "homocidal lunatic."

To err is human: to *err unfailingly* suggests something more than simple humanity. Retrospect of the daily chronicles of de Gaulle's conduct reveals, especially in the field of foreign policy, a record almost untarnished by acuity of perception or soundness of evaluation. It is hard to believe that such a record could have been compiled by simple human accident. It is possible to discern in it a principled policy.

And why should not the press have a foreign policy of its own? After all, the Pentagon and C.I.A. (to mention only two) appear to have separate foreign policies of their own, and nobody insists they conform with either the State Department or White House. The inspiration and

content of The Foreign Policy of the Press originally came from Washington—even though it came to deviate from the official policy of our Government after 1968.

There seemed to be several well-defined principles governing the Policy of the American Press (P.A.P. for short). To be fair, it must be conceded that Journalism clung to its principles with much greater consistency during the sixties than our Government adhered to *its* policies.

The first rule of P.A.P. (Policy of the American Press) was that when President de Gaulle made a diplomatic *démarche* or pronouncement it must be denounced as erroneous or deluded.

Rule two required that whenever France could be insulted, it *must* be insulted.

The third rule prescribed that even when de Gaulle's position on a problem was morally sound, logical and constructive (e.g. his Middle Eastern peace proposals—accepted at long last by our own Government), his view must be castigated as spiteful, arbitrary or "Moscow-inspired."

Rule four required us to believe that de Gaulle's foreign policy was exclusively personal—a product of individual authoritarian whim. In this perspective, we had to swallow the assumption that de Gaulle had run amok for a decade, dragging a resentful cabinet and country behind him.

Two corollaries of this are rules five and six. Number five posited that if France had a more enlightened President—one less capricious, egotistical, anachronistic or senile—her foreign policy would be vastly different. On such issues of the sixties as nuclear weapons and strategy, NATO, Vietnam, European unification, Common Market membership, international monetary policy, French views would have been practically identical to those of the United States.

The sixth rule of P.A.P. concluded, with commendably rigorous logic, that after de Gaulle's eventual removal from the scene, French diplomacy would find its way back to the paths of reason and realism. Once again there would be real warmth in Franco-American relations, just as in the good old days when Dulles and Bidault held sway.

A certain amount of resentment would inevitably result from the serious questions de Gaulle posed about American policy. But this does not explain the intensity or duration of the anti-French phenomenon. The wisdom and realism of the policies de Gaulle challenged have been increasingly questioned by hundreds of journalists, thousands of scholars and millions of thoughtful American patriots.

Complete explanation of the antagonism of the American press towards Gaullist France is beyond the scope of this article. For this, the labors of many specialists would be needed, including perhaps some psychopathologists.

According to Samuel Beckett, the flow of tears in the universe is constant; whenever one man stops shedding them, another begins. Could his zero-sum philosophy be right? If so, maybe it applies to the amount of xenophobia a nation can muster in a particular decade.

Political scientists addicted to quantitative emotional measurements should look for a correlation between the rise of anti-French animosity

and a decline of fear and hostility towards Russia and China. Who knows? They might discover a law governing the conservation of American national hostility.

Less plausible hypotheses have appeared in the pages of learned journals. Even nonscientists know that the "Communist menace" fell into such decrepitude during the past decade that it became an absurdly inadequate target for the amount of antagonism available. True, Russia's suppression of the stirrings of independence in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and her contributions to the defense of Israel's neighbors, fanned a few sparks from the dying embers of the cold war. But on the whole, the period since 1962 has been one of rapprochement between America and the Soviet Union, and Americans failed to respond to warnings about the emergence in China of a new "Yellow Peril." The spectacular re-emergence of the voice and visage of France after the return of de Gaulle to power made that country a logical candidate for confrontation.

But why not finish on a cheery note? Maybe Beckett was wrong. If so, one can hope that the total amount of our national antagonisms is not, after all, an irreducible quantity. One could then hope that America has expended so much of her reserves of this commodity against France during the past ten years that the residue will have to be used more sparingly in the future—and perhaps distributed more even-handedly among the family of nations.

One last caution: even if hysteria and hostility should prove to be a depletable resource, there is probably a limitless reserve of pure political twaddle that the press can expend in explanations or prognoses of the behavior of foreign statesmen. The ecology movement may succeed in purifying the air we breathe, but is unlikely to suppress the noxious exudations of journalistic chauvinism.

Whatever the outcome, it will be a long time before the bushwackers, bombardiers and artillerists of the press find another target of such heroic proportions as the figure of Charles de Gaulle.

## The Dutch Elms

• Sister Mary Ellen, S.S.N.D.

On the east bank of the Iowa River,  
Dutch elms carry the dead in their  
wombs. A fungus, they say; mycelium  
thin as the shred of a cloud. Strange

that spores no bigger than breath  
should undo elms in the Iowa sun,  
that giants higher than all my heads  
should wilt when wind exposes their bones.

# The Inventory

● Charles Edward Eaton

So the late grapes and the pumpkin deceive,  
The chilled glass of cider inebriates,  
The pheasant pauses and is porcelain,  
A schoolboy suffers the language again,  
Leaves lie on the ground, pieces of brocade  
Some woman did not know how to apply—  
One observes, and forever at random,  
The season burred with boredom and anxiety.

On what day, then, was the inquirer born?  
On the same day that history began?  
Or does he come just now as adversary,  
At odds with something in the rigmarole?—  
Say, "Ah," and stick out the empurpled tongue.  
Does some jaundice of the pumpkin linger?  
Flake the pheasant, disenvowel the schoolboy,  
And appliqué the leaves upon the gown.

To ask if anything is being done  
Puts the dustiest scene once more in motion—  
Innumerable autumns are obdurate,  
You and I darken like mahogany:  
The inquirer spares the drop of polish.  
There is the beautiful stillness that moves—  
Someone is handing us one thing at a time,  
The hand a magic lamp for fading slides.



# The Sign

• Margaret Alexander

Maudie Mae's fingers were deep in the diapering while her feet sandpapered the floor as if they, her feet, had brains of their own. They seemed to be thinking for themselves of all the chores yet to do. Those feet, both of them a size 10½, were anxious to move Maudie Mae on.

LeRoy, her biggest one, was with her and they were changing the twins, Anise and Clove. The baby, Rhythm Method, was still asleep. Playing in the front room of the house were three other children—Rachael, Jess, and Sara Kind. Seven little disciples in all.

With safety pins between her teeth, Maudie Mae turned again to look at her new uniform. Surely it was the most important dress in Georgia. Green nylon, hanging there all by itself on a coathanger over a nail, freshly driven into the back room door.

Two other nails on the far wall held the room's decorations. Pictures, side by side like man and wife. The man was Jesus Christ who was there to look over the children. The woman was Mrs. Roosevelt. She was there to show the children what could happen to their teeth if they allowed them to grow over a sucking thumb.

"You are going to be proud of me, LeRoy." His mother's eyes were bluer than a ticking stripe. She was bent over Clove and the pins in her mouth tied her lips over the words, giving them a chewed sound. "Who else do you know with a mama, hired to slice pies?"

But LeRoy had his mind on the game this afternoon and not on his mama's new job at the dime store. While he was pinning Anise, he rolled a baseball under his left foot.

Maudie Mae could see that she had failed to impress him.

"I'll miss being from you, LeRoy." She felt his shoulder blades which reminded her of angel wing bones. LeRoy, the only blond thing in a house full of redheads. Pale skin, pale hair, pale eyes—faded like he'd been left in the sun for too long a time.

Nine years ago when LeRoy was born, a social worker lady had put a word over him. Albino. Maudie Mae liked the way that sounded and nearly called him that. Then someone else started showing off by suggesting such a name as Alabaster, something that Maudie Mae had never heard of. Finally, she settled LeRoy on him instead. It was a more pleasant name, the way it contained two capital letters.

The social worker lady also said that LeRoy was mentally deficient or mentally sufficient . . . anyway. Maudie Mae knew that LeRoy's reasoning was somehow tied into his coloring and she laid it all down to his fading in the sun. To her, he was colored like an angel.

Sara Kind came into the room with ketchup on her face. "Mama,

that baby sitter was here from across the street and the skinny thang said to tell you she fell off the roof last night. She has herself a set of cramps."

"I'm right sorry to hear it. Tell her she can lie down on my sofabled all afternoon. My precious babies, they won't give her no trouble."

"I can't tell her. She's gone."

"Gone, gone where?" Maudie Mae ran to the front door just in time to see her babysitter get into a pick-up truck. Every last person in it was wearing a bathing suit. "Cramps, my eye!" Maudie Mae sobbed at the truck's exhaust. "And my job starts today." Slowly, over the patched linoleum, she walked back to the bedroom.

She folded the uniform and put it into a sack. "Too bad you ain't big enough to sit, LeRoy."

He lowered his head to look smaller. That's all I need, he thought, to get stuck in the house all afternoon long with a mess of wetting, crying babies. Three of them in diapers. "The game today is a big one."

"You say that every day." Maudie Mae noticed what a fine job he'd done diapering Anise. "How old are you, LeRoy?"

"Nine, like you know it."

"Nine! Why, nine is next door to ten. Ten, LeRoy!"

"Nine."

"I remember when I was ten." She took her dress out of the sack. "How I hepped my mama."

"You asking me to miss my game?" He looked over at his baseball glove, oystering a ball.

"I gots to work." Then, seeing the miserable way he was standing, Maudie Mae remembered what the doctor down at City Hall had said. LeRoy's playing ball good would make him feel equal to the other children and that was the next best thing to giving him back his coloration. Feeling equal.

"Well, LeRoy honey, you can miss some of that game. We are on our last box of corn flakes."

And was there any telling when his daddy would come home? That travelling preacher man who pitched tents and spread the joy of Jesus all over Georgia. Maudie Mae missed LeRoy's daddy more than his collection plate money and a shelf full of cereal. She smiled, thinking him over, how he'd kneel down at night beside their sofabled, whispering words to Sweet Jesus into his folded hands, hands that would come unfolded once he was lying beside her, leading him on to a different prayer, hammering at the top of his steeple, "Lordy, Lordy!" But Maudie Mae had to put it away, that thinking, until evening when she would be lying single in her unfolded bed.

Now Maudie Mae smiled big to show LeRoy that she could take it, this trying time. "Do the sitting and the chores while I'm at work. You can play ball after I'm home."

Over the frown on LeRoy's face, Maudie Mae got a vision of herself wearing the uniform with a yellow pencil behind her ear. She would work her way up to cash registering where she could sit on a stool and dip her fingers into the coolness of nickels and dimes. "I'll get to brag on you,

LeRoy. Tell folks I got me a albino boy." She elbowed him seriously. "That's as far as you can get from being a nigger."

"I ain't missing no game. I ain't, I ain't, I ain't!" LeRoy hid the ball in his pocket.

"Hush up, LeRoy. What is Jesus going to think of you?" The mother looked over at the picture on the wall but Jesus was still smiling. Well, God is truly love, she thought as LeRoy stomped his feet and got madder and madder without ever adding a bit of color to his face. Then she said softly, "I'll bring you home some pie."

"Pie?" Now why'd she have to say that? LeRoy remembered what pie was like. He knew everything about it, eating it warm from the stove and cold from the ice box. Pie. His stomach sent up a noise. He was almost licking his fingers. "Pie?"

"Yeah, honey. Like I used to make." She pointed to the babies, the cribs, the piles of washing. "Before all this."

LeRoy went over to Rhythm Method's bed to take his baseball glove out of her mouth.

Maudie Mae thought he was going to change her diapers. "LeRoy, honey, I knew you'd hep me!" She was so excited that when she went into the kitchen, she forgot to duck. A strip of fly paper caught in her hair. She laughed it away.

LeRoy, furious and white, tore outside.

In the kitchen, Maudie Mae gave the twins an old valentine box. "Here's you some play purties." Sara Kind and Jess rolled empty spools of thread over the floor so the little twins would get the idea. Rachael turned on the gas stove.

"Lordamercy!" Maudie Mac grabbed Rachael's fingers and sat down, worried, with her apron between her knees. The mischief kids get into. She'd read it all in the newspapers. Now, revolver-like, the horrors came to her. "Where's that LeRoy?"

"Out yonder, under the rain barrel. Washing."

His mother went to the back porch and saw LeRoy standing white and tall under the strings of water. His baseball was being kept dry in his outstretched hand.

"LeRoy, get that ball game off your mind. I'm leaving here at lunch time and you are in charge."

When he came into the house a few minutes later, Maudie Mae sat him down for some warnings.

Only last week, she had read about crib deaths in a magazine. But she forgot what it had said. There was something else written about plastic bags. She remembered all about them. "When kids pull them over their heads," she told LeRoy, "they suffocate, without a peep." She noticed him socking the ball into his glove. "And you. Whether I'm here or not, don't you chase no balls in front of a moving car."

His frown lines pinched up. Don't she know we play ball in the lot? He looked down the hall, through the bedroom window, and out to the lot. He saw that he could leave the window open and still be able to hear them youngins cry. The diaper smell came to him from the bedroom, slashing

his eyes into water. He wiped a sleeve across his face and batted his mother's favorite question back to her, "Where is your faith?"

Bless his heart, Maudie Mae thought, seeing his eyes, hearing his question. "Here now," she winked, "I ain't worried none about you taking good care of them children. God will hep you." Then she said to Jess and Sara Kind and Rachael, "This afternoon, you do ever thing LeRoy tells you, you hear?"

Jess said, "I wish I was big as LeRoy."

LeRoy turned his head to hide a smile. Being big. It put him in mind of being their daddy. He would look after the children and play ball, too.

After lunch when the children were in their beds, Maudie Mae put on the slick uniform. She turned around for LeRoy to see every side of her. At the door, she gave him a list of chores to do while the youngins were asleep. "Remember, do ever thing I said and you'll get some pie." She winked at him again as if they shared a secret. He liked the way her eyelashes and the wrinkles beside her eye moved together when she winked. A leaf of tiny lines.

He watched his mother walk to the bus stop. When she was out of sight, he woke up the big ones, Jess and Sara Kind, and sent them out to play. Then he got Rachael up and set her at the table, coloring in the Holy Bible with red nail polish. "Holler at me if them babies wake up." But he knew they wouldn't wake up. They'd sleep clean through the afternoon. He would do the chores fast and get out to that lot. LeRoy was reading the list and rubbing his eyes when he heard the game begin. "Batter up!"

At the kitchen window, he yelled, "Shut up! You wanna wake the dead?" He put eight spoons around the table for supper and took the lid off the trash can so the cat could eat.

"LeRoy! Game time!"

Rhythm Method started to cry. LeRoy's head began to scream, Shut up, Shut up. Next thing he knew, the twins would be hollering. And he was nearly done with the list.

Only number nine was stumping him. He could barely make it out because lines had been drawn all over the words, lines that were pleasing and drew his attention. Finally, he was able to read the words underneath. *Sprinkle the ironing*. But inside these words, his mother had added a note. It said, *I done the sprinkling for you. It's wrapped up in plastic bags in the ice box. Don't eat it, ha ha.*

The first thing LeRoy thought of was her warning about keeping plastic bags away from the babies. He opened the ice box door and saw inside three bags of sprinkling. But the handle was high. Them babies couldn't reach it.

"Who's catching? Who's pitching? Where's Leroy?"

The twins began to cry.

A ball bounced on the tin roof and LeRoy's arm went straight up from the bucket of diapers he was holding, as if he could catch the ball. He was born to catch. Then he heard it rolling down the roof and thumping to the ground.

It seemed like he'd never get out to play. He put the diapers in a pail of water.

Outside, the boys began to sing. "LeRoy's doing diapers, LeRoy's doing diapers." Sara Kind must of told them. Quickly, he looked at the list. Rhythm Method cried louder. Well, let her howl. Number nine . . . no, the other ones on the list.

He moved his fingers down the page and again it stopped at number nine. Those scratchings reminded him of something with the up and down lines all slanted and bunched together.

Then he knew.

The lines looked like eyelashes to him, like his mama's eyelashes squeezed over her winking eye. Well, what did it mean, that wink? Was it a sign? He thought of her warnings, remembering what plastic bags could do. He went to the ice box again. Three plastic bags. Three babies. Now the sight of those bags scared him. He slammed the door. His breath was noisy. Naw! Why'd she want me to do that?

"Sissy, sissy, LeRoy."

He banged down the kitchen window. But he could still hear them yelling. Everybody on the street could hear them. Didn't they know he couldn't get out there fast enough? What could he say to shut them up? His daddy was always letting on how the Lord puts words into his mouth. So LeRoy prayed for the right things to say, waited a minute then yelled out the window, "Take that bat and shove it. I ain't ready yet!"

He picked up the list.

"Sissy, sissy LeRoy."

The twins and Rhythm Method were screaming.

LeRoy couldn't think straight. Again his eyes were attracted to number nine.

Now the scarey idea he had was loud and getting louder in his head, coming at him like footsteps, running, until he could see it all over his eyes. And the kids outside kept yelling sissy at him and the three babies inside kept crying without sleeping and all of the noises grew inside and outside his ears, confusing him until he couldn't wonder any more what his mama meant for him to do. With his hands over both ears and his head down low, he said another prayer.

He felt strengthened.

Quickly now, LeRoy finished up his chores.

## Tanka

• J. M. Dunning

train of moisture from  
cicada's wing wet with dew  
drips on lotus leaf,

if it falls to earth and rests  
might it become a diamond? . . .

# Janus

• Claude F. Koch

"Esto Perpetua"—the lichen grew  
Across the stone, but my young father knew  
That Wissahickon springs in Germantown ran clear.  
Then Kelpius, Pastorius, Mr. Chew,  
And other such were names upon the land.

And once, close on the turning of the year,  
We two trespassed the Lower Burial Ground. My hair  
Feathered across my eyes (I only know  
I never really saw him clear; he died  
In 1918 of the flu.

Young godling, he will change, Vitumnus-like,  
Even as he leads me by the hand).

I tooted on a horn, ate crackerjack. He said:  
"The British peppered all the gorse with shot;  
A colonial warrior's buried with his horse  
Under that conifer—now what  
Do you think of that?"

Quick

As a wink for aye he palms the prize  
That I've been hunting for with feathered eyes  
Long since. His young face smiles for all my time.

I wince, remembering our game among the tombs.

He lifts me, and I'm head-high on a limb:  
"The bones are like a centaur's underground.  
Or Sagittarius slipped from the zodiac.  
Old War has called to heel his muzzling hound—  
So there, stripped clean of flesh until doom cracks,  
Companionable, they spin the year around."

He moves a finger, circling, through the air  
And brings it to my nose: "A child is far  
From all but dreams of a new breed  
Of men, half-human and half-beast,  
But when you get to my age, you'll believe."

I'm twice his age, and I've felt centaurs rise  
From more than clay, while Wissahickon springs run dry  
I would be father to the man, and say:  
"My child, protect me from your faith. My hand  
Trembles. The centaurs' hooves are on the land."

My father smiles up at a fond old man.

# Les Baux Dialogue

• D. L. Winchester

Eleventh century ascendences  
Sketched into the hollow shell of sky  
With the edge of a single tongue  
Probing bright air for those  
Old flags shredded into feathers  
And flapping like pigeon's wings  
Between the broken spaces.

Disappearing messengers  
Exhaled across the jagged edges  
Of a castle once perched on the teeth  
Of its name—the rocks—li bau  
Rising above the plain of reclaimed marsh  
Biting into the sky at nothing.

Princes descended from Balthazar  
A wise man's house of arms  
Its sixteen-pointed stars  
Radiating from the city's single door  
The emblem's armies fading in the sun  
As the horizon fell to Louis  
Brought to their knees  
Before the white stone carving  
Of the Roman Marius, his wife,  
His Syrian prophetess Martha,  
Mistaken for Les Trois Maries;  
Splinters of prayer falling  
Backwards into the Val d'Enfer  
The empty mouths of bauxite mines.

The pigeons have disintegrated skyward  
Abandoning their bright eggs and stone nests  
To the lizards, leaving  
Questions for the sun-scaled tourists  
I scurry through the spaces in your name  
Past the hatching cockatrice.

# The Vacuum

• Lawrence P. Spingarn

“ . . . and dust . . . to dust returneth.”

Today he was not sure of those irrevocable final words. As the coffin disappeared into the autumn-brown Ligurian earth, Vicar Roberts closed his prayer book and faced the mourners. Everyone in Almendra had sworn that Miss Mayberry would live a full century, but here she'd passed at eighty-eight, and Mr. Goforth, nodding his palsied head, appeared to breathe deeper for having survived her. He was ninety-one. The Herrods, South Africans, very rich, and only in their mid-sixties, hardly belonged to the small faithful remnant. Charles O'Brien, of course, was not a communicant of St. Brendan's Anglican Church, so that, even if one included the Parkinsons who seldom came to services from Regione Caizze, the whole parish numbered thirty-eight.

“We've dwindled,” Mr. Goforth piped up. “Is it true, Vicar, that the Bishop has asked for a conjoining?”

When the Vicar gazed at and through Mr. Goforth, his eyes borrowed more of the sky's washed out blue. His mouth opened, his lean ears hewed closer to the bony skull, his adam's apple escalated. Had somebody else seen the Bishop's letter?

“N-not exactly. I've been instructed . . . t-to review our situation and write him our thoughts. We should meet and l-look over the accounts, at least.”

“At least!” George Herrod said. “But does the matter depend on us alone?”

The Vicar glanced from Herrod to the Parkinsons; from them to Lady Rennie; from her to the Grossmiths and their unmarried daughter, Emily. No, their fate was no longer in the grasp of the English Colony at Almendra, which Madge Mayberry's father had helped establish in 1878. True, Lady Rennie had donated the new altar just five years ago. Emily Grossmith still played the organ competently and handled accounts, but now the choir had been disbanded for lack of tenors. The Parkinsons, the Fullers and the Clives owed tithes they simply couldn't pay. The circulating library, with Miss Mayberry dead, might have to retrench and Herrod, niggard that he was, would vote to merge with the larger English parish at Oneglia, four miles off.

“I'm counting on Gibraltar,” the Vicar began. “N-not for the money, only the permission to stay and d-do my work.”

“The money!” Herrod almost spat in dismay. “Two wars've finished us proper. Why, I was charged £ 9 to ferry the Bentley across the Channel last month. I don't know how people can travel out and back on what they're allowed.”



"Mr. Herrod . . . Mr. Herrod, you're comparatively fortunate. You've got a South African visa. The £ 50 limit doesn't touch you."

When Lady Rennie answered thus, twin spots of dubious red showed on her unwrinkled cheeks. She didn't, however, use rouge. Ageless, officious, and rather masculine in her propensity for walking sticks, tweed capes, and slang, she had, the Vicar recalled, come to Almendra as early as 1924. Her annoyance promptly swelled to bitterness; he felt obliged to intervene.

"Please, please. It's natural to be upset this week at our great loss. We've had a hard blow, but let's be tolerant of each other. Uh-h, Lady Rennie. . . . D'you suppose we could keep the Library open for an hour Friday mornings?"

"If you like, Vicar Roberts—if it suits you. But I hope I'm not expected to dust the shelves. The dust's gotten thick since Elvira quit working there, and with my asthma dust isn't good."

*Dust to dust*, the Vicar mumbled as he watched the sacristan level the grave. A double guilt weighed upon him; not merely had he retained Elvira to "do" for him after she'd abandoned the Library, but he so much enjoyed a quiet read at bedtime in the parish house. For three decades he'd confined himself to theology. No wonder novels, and diaries, lingered in his mind like wine on the tongue—especially those racy memoirs of the courts of Europe. . . . In his pre-occupation, he failed to notice Emily Grossmith until she pressed his arm.

"Vicar, you won't forget tea tomorrow—or did Mother say eight, for supper? Oh, well, you choose. We're always delighted."

Emily was fifty, stout, given to hysterics; easy to guess her motive for inviting him in the trough of the week. She wanted his sympathy and even his support. Her father, it seemed, opposed her engagement on the grounds that Signor Becci was ten years her junior. His real objection was to Becci's nationality, religion, and poverty; the Grossmiths would never support a son-in-law. To them, Amilcare Becci, head cashier at the Banco d'Inghilterra e Almendra, was the shabby adventurer in quest of buried wealth. *Tolerance, tolerance*. . . . The Vicar wrung his hands.

"Tomorrow! Ah, yes, but I'd prefer supper. Eight will be very nice, thanks."

He dared not admit why he'd chosen supper. Tea, he found, was always rather insubstantial. Whenever he had to make do with tea, he was ravenous by evening. Besides, few of his parishioners biked through town on their errands or along the sea wall to the Capelletto and the beacon of San Maggiore, as he was forced to. Though now he was on foot and several of the mourners had come by car, none offered him a lift. They were receding in thin grey lines: as he locked the cemetery gate, only Miss Cobb—poor, demented Miss Cobb—was on hand to walk him down the *mulatierra* to the paved streets below.

She rattled on about communion, about the tarnished plate that needed special cloth to remove the dull coat of neglect. With half an ear he listened: when they emerged at the edge of Piazza Cavour, his innards whimpered for tobacco. Again he'd left his pipes at home. Again he craved luxury, and when he'd parted, with difficulty, from Miss

Cobb, he ran in desperation to the Magazzino Inglese. Signora Pellegrino was the child of an expatriate Edwardian painter who'd never legitimized her. Indeed, she spoke with the heightened consciousness of not quite belonging to either culture. Today she bowed to the Vicar: today he'd have a tin of Craven A's, not the acrid indigenous Nazionalis that cost so much less and smoked faster.

"A-ah," he said as he blew his first ring. "And a package of those biscuits, please—the digestive ones."

For a man sixty-seven, he really didn't have to pamper his stomach. He ate what he fancied; in warm weather, he swam vigorously and played dogged tennis, but perhaps the smoking ought to be curtailed. His true distress came from having to charge small purchases like this until the monthly collection was taken for his keep, since the Diocese of Gibraltar assumed just the ordinary maintenance at St. Brendan's. His true distress was a cramp followed by the humiliating ague of regret; his "salary" never exceeded twelve guineas per month—but Signora Pellegrino smiled forgivingly.

"*Reverendo*. . . . When did you come to Almendra? I mean, my husband says thirty-five years and I say thirty, but I was a child and couldn't have remembered. It's of no account."

"The account! Oh, I was going to mention that, only I'm afraid—"

Her smile broadened. In church, his deafness was a mockery, especially when the echo from the vaulted roof distorted the sacred words, yet La Pellegrino wasn't even talking of his debt to her. Carefully she rubbed out the misapprehension.

"A-ah!" the Vicar exclaimed. "*When, when!*"

While he laughed gallantly, he was transported back to the morning in June, 1930; the crucial morning. After his ship disembarked at Genoa, the train ride to Almendra was hedged with suspense, though when he'd stepped out to the flower and flag-decked platform to be welcomed by Mr. Goforth, he knew that he could not return to his school post in England. And later, coming from the bright sun to the hushed shadow, he'd clutched the altar rail in gratitude. Thirty-five years? The shopkeeper's husband was correct. The flags still flew. The flowers still bloomed in geometrical precision. Only the scarlet ranks of the British colonists had yielded to waves of prosperous Germans, demanding French, nondescript Swiss and Belgians. By next June, the promenade that meandered from station to beach would be thick with guttural accents. 1930. The best portion of his life had been spent among banners, music, alien voices.

"And these also," he pleaded, adding to 90-lire cylinder of pastilles that might soothe his throat. The label read: Mayberry & Co., Ltd. The fortune Miss Mayberry had willed to a niece in Australia had been based on lozenges, cough medicine, toffee and treacle. *But cut out cigarettes*, he wrote on a blank page of his mind as he left the shop for the glare of the Piazza Cavour. The fountain spilled carelessly into its basin. The bronze maenads rode nowhere on the blind dolphins. And in the shade, the drivers of the *carrozze* idly flicked their whips, waiting for summer.

Yet, unless he skirted the Piazza, he could not avoid the window

in the bank. Of course. Amilcare Becci would still be lunching with his parents in the Quartiere Testico, but Vilfredo, moping at his desk, tapped the pane when he saw the Vicar pass below. Thanks to his English father, the banker was tall, cadaverous, blond. He had, at any rate, two views of the street; two views of Almendra that didn't necessarily agree. His clients, therefore, approached him with a certain trepidation.

"Sit down, Vicar," he invited. "I was sorry to learn about Miss Mayberry. Odd, too. In the end, she didn't trust her affairs to the bank. . . ."

So this bothered Vilfredo; this *graffiti* appended to the old maid's will in defiance of local custom. Still, the Vicar reflected, the banker had absorbed the graveside expenses of a dozen elderly colonists, his father's clients and friends, who, as the pound sterling weakened, had moved from walled villas with pretentious names to beggarly rooms in *pensioni* around the Sotto Marina. Perhaps, though, the survivors were too prone to judge and condemn Wilfred Manning's son. His wealth offended the newly impoverished.

"And I've been hearing rumors, Vicar—rumors that you may have to pack up and shut your doors. I'm not surprised, but how is a church like yours deconsecrated?"

The statuette on the littered desk was naked, pagan, faintly obscene, yet the Vicar focussed attention on the blushing pink marble. The banker had never worshiped at St. Brendan's. Indeed, he was imprisoned by the scandal of his domestic tangles; his Sunday family cost dear. He was one of the community's few "night husbands," a sad glutton for paternity who'd managed by sheer luck to hold apart the opposed halves of his life. And this explained his alleged greed, his skepticism, his curiosity.

"*Reverendo*, do me a favor. I've made enough in Almendra to share out a bit. What if I gave the church something in memory of my father and uncles? An endowment, a gift without strings. . . ."

The Vicar hesitated. The Bishop's letter was the key; he must hurry back to the parish house and read it again. Meanwhile, he must answer only with generalities, or, better, refuse the gift outright. To accept was to fall under obligation. His tongue grew fuzzy.

"Thank you, n-no. Of course, we're touched. We all f-fondly remember your father, but really, 'twon't be necessary. You see, I've gotten a stay of execution, so to speak. Whether St. Brendan's closes or not's up to the congregation, and I'm quite optimistic. In fact, I j-just heard that some newcomers will be arriving from England next month."

His rushing stammer embarrassed the Vicar more than the figurine on the banker's desk. Sensuously rubbing the figurine, Vilfredo took in the Vicar's nervous flutter, his dropped gaze, his papery hands pushing away charity. With a sigh, he relinquished his offer.

"Very well, then. I merely wanted to help. Good afternoon, *Reverendo*."

When he was outside, the Vicar castigated himself for having put forward the slender hope of recruits. True, he'd had inquiries from various people on the brink of retirement; people who'd soon lie beneath

temporary markers in the English cemetery, who might never afford the imposing stone monument that covered Miss Mayberry. The larger truth should have bothered him more: he wasn't entitled to free board and lodging, once he abandoned his pulpit. The Gibraltar diocese couldn't provide for superannuation. He'd be destitute. As he hurried along the Via Mazzini, the chill *tramontana* tapped him on the shoulder. From the tennis club, whose grounds the pioneer Mayberrys had planned, he heard the *plon-plon* of balls on the red clay courts.

Peering through the wire fence, he saw the pigeon-stained iron head of Daniel Mayberry frowning upon the overgrown arbors, hedges, paths. Only ten years ago, the membership parties had been tame and decorous. Now the bronzed, handsome North Italians jigged or twisted to their own lively jazz. Like the Contessa; yes, that was she in a brief whirl of pleats on the center court, with the adolescent Giraldo half her age for partner, for a prop to her ravaged beauty. Indeed, the Contessa was notorious, yet, while he assessed the firm columns of her bare legs in motion, Vicar Roberts felt a twinge of sympathy. Only she at the end had spent hours in Miss Mayberry's sickroom. Only the Babylonian woman, the moral leper had displayed a Christian love that surpassed his, for he'd not gone to the Villa Mercede until he was called. . . .

The church door was ajar. As he entered, the Vicar smelled damp rot, mouldering wood, bat dung, hot wax. A single taper burned on the altar, whose cloth hung dispiritedly to the stone dais. Habit made him genuflect and brought him to the front pew, where Mr. Goforth sat contemplating. Mr. Goforth didn't see the shadow that crossed his. Quickly the Vicar opened a hymnal to Vespers. He couldn't hold notes, he seldom tried. His cantorial voice was a jest, and the service, which still Honored King Edward VII, jumped on the page, yet the benediction wasn't entirely lost on the older man. When Mr. Goforth glanced up at the altar, his rheumy eyes twinkled. The swallow trapped among the beams skittered higher at the ring of his hoarse bark.

"I bought you a posy, Vicar. Stopped at the house first, but Elvira wasn't there. Aye, a dozen late roses. This season I've been fortunate."

They stood in the vicarage garden comparing Mr. Goforth's blooms to those wilting on the trellis. Here English plants grew drowsy and somnolent; Surrey and Almendra had different virtues. The sky darkened. Conversation flapped. When Mr. Goforth seized his cane and limped off, huge noiseless tears rolled down the Vicar's cheeks.

"El-veer-rah!" he shouted, invading the hall. "El-veer-rah!"

But the *donna* had gone for the evening, the north wind rattled loose panes as he climbed to the second floor. Where, then, was the Bishop's letter? Not on the carved desk in his study on or the cork board tacked to the wall above; had it actually come? Ah, that wretched Elvira! Her passion for order was monstrous in an Italian, and the letter—supposing it existed—was probably in the dust bin below. Sudden weariness pulled at his knees. He fell upon the Roman chair. The narrow celibate's bed could not fathom the mystery of the letter's whereabouts.

Now the very canopy seemed pure affectation. He'd painted the panels head and foot to be consistent; they also gave evidence of his pride, of his

superb taste worthier of banker or prince. But the clinching proof was the footstool. Five needles he'd broken on the *petit-point*—he who seldom rested his feet there. On the other hand, these dog-eared volumes showed only devotion: Loeb Classics, a Biblical atlas, concordances that bored him silly, one irreverent French work on the Virgin that hardly belonged—but the dust bin! Had the Bishop really left the choice of closing the parish to him, to thirty-nine exiles at Almendra? No, the closing was inevitable. Going below to reheat the food Elvira had cooked earlier, the Vicar felt sorely disheartened.

The indifferent meal wasn't sweetened by his usual tot of wine—nor was the letter in the dust bin. Upstairs again, he wrestled manfully with his unfinished sermon. The words didn't flow. It required a mastery of sophistry to draw heartening parallels between his diminished flock and that valiant band of wilderness prophets who found strength in their tribulations. When the blank foolscap still gaped at him, he thought of wiping his pen and turning to the novel on his night table. Surely, surely he'd be allowed an hour's ease! He took off his canonicals, wrapped his shrunken frame in the tattered bathrobe. Again he yearned for a cigarette, but as he tucked the bedclothes around his legs, smoke pointed a giant question mark at the ceiling. Tomorrow; how many tomorrows remained?

In the dream, he was going by Underground from his old post at Shepherd's Bush to Lambeth Palace. His battered suitcase held the treasure he'd carried to England from Almendra: the plate, the vestments, the pyx and censor of the High Church service. Though he knew by heart each word of the order of release, his fellow passengers were staring rudely. Granted a deconsecrated altar and chapel, some would object that he'd missed an important step; some of these passengers, for example, might attend the interview and witness the Bishop's reprimand. . . . But now he'd gone astray. The platform signs were wrong! The hurtling cars had made a complete circle, for here he was at Green Park, moving toward cold day on the automated stairs. Once in the fresh air, he wandered aimlessly. Regent Street was a headache, the klaxons a migraine, the crowds a fever. Rounding a safe corner, he caught the blinking eye of the Turkish bath and rang the night bell.

The attendant who let him in seemed familiar. For a paltry 10/6 the Vicar had always enjoyed both the steam treatment and the privilege of sleeping an entire night on the massage table. After 8:30, nobody was asked to leave, but as he stretched down, he did not surrender the Gladstone bag. The harder he clasped the bag, the louder hissed the steam. Languor overcame him, invisible hands kneaded his thighs—but the attendant was in the neighboring booth pounding the rump of a grotesquely fat customer. As the Vicar shouted for the attendant, the canvas screen fell on him. He awoke in the frigid vicarage bedroom, sweating with fright and hearing the distant ocean like a pulse.

At midnight, he quit pretending sleep might come again. The carton he sought was in the alcove where his clothes hung. The machine had often been used since last Christmas, when Miss Mayberry's chauffeur had delivered it. The plug filled the outlet, but as he worked the switch, he trembled from eagerness. The vacuum was Miss Mayberry's notion of a

farewell present; the thought was kind. When that harsh roar gathered strength, he could imagine once again the traffic looping about Leicester Square and into the Long Acre. He saw the glare of headlamps, the silhouettes of hoardings against the sky, the kaleidoscope of action. In a moment, he'd shut off this metal lung, which had become his vine, his addiction, his soporific. As he felt sleep prodding him toward the bed, he composed a tired prayer of gratitude. Tonight, God willing, he'd sleep blissfully, out of the noise and the dust.

## Near Innisfree

• Daniel Hoffman

A ruined castle scars one hill,  
An unroofed abbey wounds the other.  
In their defile a disused mill  
Crumbles toward the racing water.

Field of thistle, crop of thorn.  
A randy donkey's found the gap  
In a fallen fence of stone.  
It's on the mare he's mounting up.

And there's the gypsy's cart, his fire,  
And swilling a stick in the pot, his crone.  
It rains. A chill grips my desire  
For all I would disown, or own.

# The Statement of Mrs. Thaddeus Usheen to the Press Upon Being Rescued by the Coast Guard

• Ruth Berman

I remember the salt, chiefly. The taste of the water rushing at my mouth and the white crusting slowly on my scalp, and the cold clothes, heavy with the weight of saltwater, pulling, binding, knotting about me—I remember that. I don't know what happened to the yacht. The Coast Guard questioned me very thoroughly, and I simply do not remember.

Probably, I was asleep at the time. The wind was against us when we sailed down the coast, and Usheen was having himself a lovely time tacking back and forth and being quite obviously too busy to work.

It's a tax deduction, you know. Or at least, he always claims it is. I don't know if they've ever actually let him get away with it, but it's a place of business. He writes his scenarios there, where his secretaries and assistants and associates can't get at him to do the producing work. He still thinks . . . thought? . . . of himself as a writer, and the yacht was where he did his writing and got inspiration. Mostly, he got inspiration.

It was all blue when we started out. The land hazed out as we got away and turned into a blue cloud, and the water was silvered blue, with sparks, where the sun hit it. And the sky, of course. We drank some. Usheen wasn't drunk. I think I was, a little. I don't remember.

And then there was all that cold salt in my mouth, and I couldn't breathe, and suddenly chunks of the water turned solid underneath me and began to move. Those were dolphins, perhaps. I remember Usheen said there were dolphins following us, but I couldn't see them that day. They're friendly creatures. They laugh at you all the time, but they don't mean any harm by it. So perhaps when the waters turned solid it was dolphins. Or perhaps it was tritons. I thought I heard seashells blowing.

The salt kept getting in my mouth, and I couldn't breathe. The water sheered up on each side of me like mountains, and the solid water behind me kept charging along with me, and suddenly I found myself sinking in water, and the solids had gone, whatever they were. I floundered, trying to swim and too tired to move my arms, and got another mouthful of water, and between surprise and coughing I stopped trying to swim. My feet sank down and found pebbles. I stood safe in sweet water that came up only to my shoulders.

A green island, touched gold by trees in flower, rose up ahead of me. So I washed my hair.

I couldn't do a very good job without any shampoo or any soap, even, but the water was sweet, and I could feel the salt netted in my hair. I didn't want to go upon the land that way, so I washed my hair. Then I walked up to the beach. I'd lost my shoes somewhere, and the pebbles

cut my feet. When I came to the grass I crawled, and when I came to the first of the flowering trees I sat down against the trunk on the side where the sunlight reached. I stayed there a long time, drying out and wondering what kind of tree it was and what kind of fruit had gold blossoms. A wind came after a while and blew some of the blossoms down. It felt cold at first, but then it finished drying me, and it was warm.

I ate the blossoms that fell. I was afraid to climb the trees for more. They wouldn't have been easy to climb, anyway. The bark was old and fragile, and crumbled at any weight. The branches didn't begin until maybe fifteen or twenty feet above the ground.

I am sure I slept then. I remember waking from a dream, but I have forgotten the dream.

My feet hurt less, and I wanted to explore my island.

It seemed like mine.

So I walked about under the trees, and by and by I came out to another beach of pebbles. I did not walk there; I sat on the grass, in the sunlight. The shadows did not move there. Perhaps I had slept a full twenty-four hours round, and perhaps I was too full of the island to notice a gradual change in the light, but certainly the sun was where it was when I fell asleep and when I woke, and I do not think it moved while I was on my island. It was a gentle light, deep colored like summer afternoon, but too clear and cool for that.

And there was a spring—a fountain, sort of—in the center of my island. It was afraid to drink out of it, though. The stream from it came by me on the far side of my island and ran out to fill the ocean there with fresh water, so I thought.

Sitting there beside the stream, on the far side of my island, I could see more islands spreading out ahead of me to . . . the east or the west. I couldn't tell which unless the sun moved.

After a few hours—well, no. It could have been a few minutes. I'm not sure which. But I saw a figure walking on the nearest island. It carried its shoulders like Usheen and though I couldn't so much as tell from that distance if it was male or female, I thought it was Usheen. It knelt as if to drink from a stream. I jumped to my feet and shouted "Usheen! No!" because I thought that stream must be like mine and somehow wrong to drink from.

Jumping hurt my feet, and I fell to the grass again. I got up to my knees, but the figure was out of sight. I felt lonely then, with all those other islands standing there out of reach and paying no attention to me, so I crawled back to the near side of my island and watched the waves sliding back and forth on the pebbles, and the sun-track shifting on the waves.

I don't know how long I sat there. I sat until I heard a noise from the far side of my island, and then I got up—cautiously, that time—to try to see what it was.

It was a boy, running across the island. His skin shone silver in the light, except his feet. They were cut—much worse than mine—and bleeding. I had an idea somehow it was Usheen, come across from the next island. But his feet were cut so, I thought he must have run across a great



many rocky stretches, and there should only have been two if he'd come from the next island. I don't know why I thought it might have been Usheen. Something about the way he held his head tilted into the wind as he ran, perhaps.

He shouted as he ran—that was the noise I heard first. I think he was shouting all the way, but the trees had muffled it. "Free, free!" I think it was. Or it may have been "Me, me!" Or maybe it wasn't words at all. I don't know.

He ran by me without stopping, or even seeing me, I think. I said "Usheen?" in a tentative sort of way, but he went right on. I even tried shouting "Thaddeus!"—he hated to be called that—if it was Usheen—and "Hey, you!" but he was already past me and stumbling across the rocks and out into the water.

The water held him. He ran on the crests of the waves. I kept thinking he would trip and fall into a trough, but he ran on into the sun, with never a look down or back, shouting.

And then I knew that he was dying. At least, I knew it at the time. I don't know now what made me think so, whether it was his wounded feet, or his wildness, or what.

I ran out after him, trying to ignore the pebbles as much as I could. The water was plain water for me, when I got to it. It was still sweet, and I took a long drink, because I was thirsty by then, but it didn't hold me. I couldn't run. But I'm a good swimmer, when I'm not caught by surprise, that is. I stripped off my clothes and swam after him along the path of the sun.

It was glorious swimming. The water was warm and transparent. I could see my shadow waving over the pebbles and, beyond that, over white sand. But in the end I got tired. I turned on my back to rest a bit, floating, and began to wonder if I ought to turn back to the island.

Then a wave broke over my head. It was salt.

I choked and struggled and had to tread water while I got my wits together and my breath back. The water was salt. And the sun was setting. I screamed. I think I screamed for a long time. My throat was hoarse when the Coast Guard picked me up.

*(Statement killed at the request of Mrs. Usheen's physician.)*

## Boy 7

• Laura Burks Alnutt

Defenseless he sleeps  
His face as pure  
As marble  
Still unwrought,

And I must be  
His sculptor,  
Apprentice  
Still untaught.

# Sleep

• William Virgil Davis

Although we both sleep  
our separate sleep, we can not  
forget how we held together,  
holding together even now.

Even if we are dreaming  
of someone else, we touch  
each other when we turn  
and memory reminds us

of where we are. We breathe  
each other's breath, turn  
in answer to the other's  
turnings. We are separate

in our togetherness like  
fallen logs decaying under  
a blanket of moss. Tomorrow  
we will be lonely and alone.

# The Poems, That Fire

• Donal Mahoney

I stood in the alley, still  
in pajamas, somebody's shoes,  
another man's raincoat, my eyes  
on the bronc of the hoses.  
Squawed in the blankets of neighbors,  
my wife and three children sipped  
chocolate, stood orange and still.  
Of the hundred or more I had stored  
in the drawer, I could remember,  
comma for comma, no more than four,  
none of them final,  
all of them fetal.

# Their Hobby

• W. V. Mittnacht

That fishtank had been left uncleaned for so long that it was something to avoid seeing. After the water had half evaporated, there was a film from the decayed waste of the fish. To relieve this condition, all they had to do was add more water. For the time being that would cover the dirt, though at the same time the chemicals of the untreated water they did not bother to prepare might kill another fish.

Killing another fish did not really bother them. In fact it might have been a delight. Sometime shortly after they had saved and dreamed of having a fishtank they lost interest. It meant nothing to them to watch those tiny things swim around in circles as it did when they first brought the tank home. They had been so excited. That excitement died, and became bother.

They grew tired of having to clean it. It was no fun to spend the time in a bathroom full of wet towels and the smell of decay compacted with the gravel. The gravel, specks of colored rock, if it was real rock at all, was everywhere. They had to pick it up piece by piece, so slowly, to leave the bathroom clean. They were determined to leave the bathroom decent. Nobody wanted to use a bathroom filled with the remnants of those fish.

They had always meant to collect some real rock, solid chips of slate, from a stream. They never looked. Probably that tank would not hold anything large like the rocks they wanted. Of course they filled it with many more fish than it could hold. They wanted the most out of their tank.

They overstocked it. There was hardly enough room for the fish. By the week they would watch the pathetic things die. At first it was distressing, and they felt anxious to do all they could to prevent another death. But the failures persisted and then increased. It became extremely unpleasant to reach in the slime-filled water to fetch out the remains of a fish, nearly rotten, little more than a skeleton. It was so infrequent when they tended to the tank that a fish could have been dead a long while before they knew it.

First they took it from the little girl's room so that she would not have to suffer with it. They took it to the sitting room where everyone always read and if they became well-occupied with what they were doing, they could put the tank out of mind. The girl's brother would keep a magazine in front of his face, even if he was not reading, so that he would not have to look at it.

Then the pump—they could only afford an inexpensive one—began to break down and make an irritating grinding noise. They would hit at

it with pliers and for a few days it would work quietly. But after that, the noise grew uncontrollable. On some nights it would wake their mother so that she had to get up and shut it off. In the mornings she would complain of the uneasiness of her sleep.

The tension around that little fishtank mounted so that all they wanted was for the last of the fish to die. One held on. The strong one which had lasted since they first bought the tank. They could not kill it right out, but it was his idea to gradually shorten the periods when air was circulated by the pump. They had not touched the filter for so long that it already was a hindrance. If only the pump could also be stopped then perhaps the fish could not survive the filthy water.

Each day they shut the pump off for a longer period of time. They did it carefully, so that their mother would not know because she would not stand to have one killed, no matter how miserably it lasted floating in the water. How that slimy tank could support life for as long as it did they would never know. It was she who insisted on feeding the fish.

The fish did eventually die. The tank went to the attic where it would never be touched, along with the rest of the things from their past.

The mother, who had said nothing of the terrible deterioration of the tank which her children had not only neglected but encouraged, was enraged when the last fish went. He was the one who heard it from her. For days he heard of the terrible neglect for the creatures which he and his sister had, after all, chosen to have.

It seemed he might be able to tell her why he had bought that tank, how he had not actually wanted it. What he wanted was to reach that little girl, the sister whom he saw as himself, the sister whom he was afraid of losing. Somehow it was not the same anymore. She was growing. So badly he wanted to hold on to her. To teach her the games he once played. To see her keep using the toys he had used. To play in the very same dream world. Somehow it was going. She was becoming female. He no longer had a hold through her to his past self, to the private world he had destroyed. The fishtank was the excuse. It was sophisticated enough so that they could not do it together, and at the same time he knew they were doing it as one. They had shared the same childish excitement and found the same childish disinterest.

She had stopped coming so frequently in the morning to be warm under his blankets. She did not have to leave her bed and get cold on the way to his room. But he knew that was the whole intent. Lately, she did not come. She was too busy to come in and turn on the electric heater in his cold bathroom every morning before he left the covers.

Perhaps it was good in a way. It always seemed a little perverted of them to make such a habit of her coming into his bed. In a way it was good she was growing away from it. Most times when she came, he did not have the strength to scold her. If he did, there were fights, vicious, horrible fights. But they were fights which they both knew they enjoyed. They would scream at each other, declaring their hate and love of each other, for each other, for their selves, and it was wonderful.

He made her allow him to be a part of her small games. More often

though, she would turn on him, demanding he leave her alone. He would, pretending to be relieved, but hurt and yearning.

Actuality was terrible. It was terrible to the brother and sister, because inside in a peculiar way they also welcomed their growing apart. They welcomed the sight of the selves they saw in each other's dying. So with this thought, the boy could justify his childish encouragement of his being too near her.

He welcomed the decay of the fishtank. It was really resting there, rotting through deliberate neglect; there were no excuses of special ways to look at it so it did not seem to be rotting. The thing was dying. When he pulled off the air hose and looked down the long hollow tunnel of plastic that carried nothing but air that made the water bubble, the tube invisible and empty, he knew what he was doing. He was getting rid of those wretched animals and such a carefully planned murder was somehow appealing.

## Two Poems by Matthew Wilson

### Dead Whale, Dead Wall World

the whale wail of an ivory-legged soul  
 in a claustrophobic walled world.  
 a jury-rigged desire for thrusting beyond beyond,  
 tearing through the tormenting veil,  
 implacable white will, Triton's eldest son,  
 seas' czar and father, inscrutable oracle,  
 the whale, the proud and self contained  
 matchless and mateless one,  
 with cascading freedom and silent power  
 of a boundless reachless ocean,  
 swimming serene, sea sovereign ignores man.  
 but Ahab, last in a long line of god descended  
 gnawed hearts, like Prometheus,  
 chain bound to stone; but he, unforgiving,  
 hurled only hot hate to the sea floor.  
 he, sprung from womb of the whale,  
 could never, nor would he, break  
 that unseen cord taut, tight,  
 dragged and thrust fraught to the silent source,  
 our mother the wall.

the eldest and  
 youngest sons; one born in the silence of creation:  
 the other in defiled Promethean fires;  
 two bound by leg of flesh and whale bone  
 and Ahab's isolate hatred of that one, his brother,

who once stood near the primal fires  
and knew antinomies deep as all life alloyed,  
merged in the crucible of inscrutable fire.  
Ahab could not bear the wail, intolerable,  
that welled up nor that frigid ice-isle isolate  
in freezing malice, the whale-wall thrust near.  
as he would burst his heart-hot shell against it,  
rage to pierce and break it through, longing  
for a tree in the midst of a garden.

in the heart  
of the living whale he found but a canker.  
but even in the blasted whale,  
the blight of noisome flesh,  
the slow cancer of decay in the leprous stench  
of mortality, even there, is secreted deep  
the final fragrant ambrosial intoxicant:  
ambergris, inseparable from decay.  
but then, staring eyelids self-stitched tight  
with his primal fury obscuring the light  
from whitest whale dazzle, blinding him  
to the ancient terror and beauty of the eldest  
of creatures, first swim out of darkened seas.

crazy, sainted, Ahab, offspring.  
could heart or wall burst  
when his whale-spun, fine thread  
thrust him, dragged him  
to the dark of unsettling seas?

## Cat Depths

all cats, slink, ever sleek,  
through yet dolphin smiling,  
pirouetting silences, in padding  
somnialescence of opium eyes.

yet beneath such effort less  
ripple flow of muscles bundled,  
the cat is bounded by secret  
burning depths, still

and in crystal shatter,  
the cats wrangle and screech  
the still and dark.

for this jangle, wild, of catscreech moil  
is the still bounded fury flailing  
behind the buddha-placid eyes.



## Contributors

**C.** RICHARD CLEARY, Professor of Political Science at La Salle College, has long been a student of French government and a skeptical reader of newspapers. DANIEL HOFFMAN'S fifth book of poems, *Broken Laws*, was published by Oxford University Press in 1970. He is Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. CHARLES EDWARD EATON'S latest collection, *On The Edge of The Knife*, has been published in the Abelard Poets series. MARGARET ALEXANDER is a native of North Carolina, now lives in Germany with her Air Force physician husband. J. M. DUNNING'S tanka is from *The Cry of the Cicada*, his forthcoming volume. Mr. Dunning is a senior at La Salle College. CLAUDE F. KOCH was a founder of this magazine and has been contributing stories and poems here for 20 years. Part of his fifth novel will soon appear in *The Sewanee Review*. D. L. WINCHESTER, W. V. MITTNACHT, and MATTHEW WILSON are, like Mr. Dunning, living publishing proof of our interest in young writers. Mr. Winchester is a senior at the University of Virginia, Mr. Mittnacht is a freshman at Princeton, and Mr. Wilson is a senior at La Salle. All are making promising debuts here. LAWRENCE P. SPINGARN, on the other hand, has a long list of credits that includes *Best American Short Stories*, *Harper's*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Paris Review*. SISTER MARY ELLEN is a colleague of Sister Maura's at the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, apparently a flourishing atmosphere for poets. RUTH BERMAN, a teaching assistant at the University of Minnesota, appears here with her first published story; her poetry has appeared in *Saturday Review*, *Nimrod*, and *Identity*. LAURA BURKS ALNUTT is a Virginia poet now living in New Jersey. Her poems have appeared in the *New York Times*, *The Lyric*, and elsewhere. WILLIAM VIRGIL DAVIS, a frequent contributor, has also published in *Poetry*, *Shenandoah*, *The Nation*, and many others. DONAL MAHONEY lives in Chicago, writes that he "earns his living as a magazine editor, covets a sinecure, and is, like other versifiers, at work on a first collection of poems, to be called *The Narrowback*. His work has been seen in *Commonweal* and some 40 other magazines. The editors offer special thanks to RICHARD PEREZ of Unigraphics, Inc. for the new cover design introduced in this issue.

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